

Uveitis screening for juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA)

This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions you may have about uveitis screening for JIA patients. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the doctor caring for you.

What is uveitis?

Uveitis is a condition caused by inflammation to the inside of the eye. Uveitis is commonly associated with other inflammatory conditions of the body such as JIA. If it is left untreated, uveitis can cause blindness.

My child doesn't have any eye problems. Do I have to attend the eye screening appointments?

Yes, children often have no signs or symptoms of eye problems and, in the early stages, uveitis does not affect vision. Uveitis can quickly affect your child's eyesight if it is not treated, so it is important to diagnose uveitis as early as possible.

How often does my child need to attend the eye clinic?

Usually, eye screening appointments are every three months, but vary from patient to patient. We try to make sure that the eye appointments are on the same day as any other appointments rheumatology may have organised.

What are the signs and symptoms?

There are often no signs and symptoms that uveitis is present until complications arise, but some children may experience:

- eye pain
- red eyes
- sensitivity to light
- floaters (debris in their vision)
- abnormal pupil shape
- clouding of pupil (the black opening into the eye)
- blurry vision.

In younger children you should note

- abnormal blinking
- eye rubbing
- visual inattention
- preference to hearing signals rather than vision
- new onset misalignment of eyes

If your child develops visual signs or symptoms, you must seek medical advice. Contact the rheumatology nurse, **t:** 07918 338768, **e:** PaediatricUveitis@gstt.nhs.uk, or go to your local open Eye Casualty Department, Monday to Friday, 9am-4.30pm, or the Emergency Department (A&E).

How is uveitis diagnosed?

Uveitis can be diagnosed by the ophthalmologist examining your child's eyes with a bright light and a microscope. A high street optician assessment is not an adequate examination to exclude uveitis.

How is uveitis treated if my child has it?

Uveitis can be treated with anti-inflammatory (steroid) eye drops. For some children a dilating drop is used to make the pupil larger. Sometimes drops are not enough to treat the uveitis. If this is the case, your child may need different medication. The ophthalmology (eye) team will liaise with the rheumatology team to make sure your child has support from the relevant doctors. If your child has uveitis please ask for our leaflet, **Where to find information about Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA)**.

What happens if uveitis is left untreated?

If uveitis is left untreated in children it can lead to blindness, cataracts (a clouding over of the clear window into the eye), a change to the normal pressure of the eye and swelling at the back of the eye, which can affect your child's ability to see.

Is there anything I can do to help my child?

As uveitis is usually symptom-free in children, it is vital that your child attends their eye screening appointments. Please rearrange the appointments if you are unable to attend. In the early stages uveitis does not usually effect children's vision, but it is useful to note if your child complains of vision problems. If your child has red, painful eyes which are sensitive to light, please attend eye casualty.

Useful sources of information

JIA at NRAS (National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society), **w:** www.jia.org.uk/jia-associated-uveitis

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about uveitis screening for JIA, please contact rheumatology nurse specialists, **e:** RhEve@gstt.nhs.uk

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit, **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm **e:** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

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